



## Boot Guide: *Selecting Footwear*

The fitting information below is most applicable for individuals with a *backpacking* component on their course. All footwear is described on the following pages, along with brand names and boot models that fit into the category.

### **BOOT FITTING & SOCKS**

*Getting a proper fit* with your boots and *taking the time to break them in* are two of the most important things you can do in preparing for your Outward Bound course. First, start by finding a reputable outdoor store or outfitter in your area that has staff trained for boot fitting. **It's best to do your boot shopping in the afternoon because feet typically swell as the day progresses and this will affect the fit.** At the store try on at least two or three possible boot options. Put the first choice on one foot and the second choice on the other. Lace the boots up fully with the socks that you plan to wear — one pair of lightweight liner socks under mid-weight wool hiking socks. Start by standing on a downward slanting incline and try to jam your toes to the front of the boot. Next, take a walk around the store. The following are some basic guidelines:

- Your toes should never bump up against the front of your boot.
- Your boots should be comfortable with plenty of room to wiggle your toes at the front of the boot.
- Your heel may slip a little in the back of the boot usually 1/8" to 1/4". Any more than 1/4" is too much.
- There should be no obvious pressure points.

Your boots should feel comfortable, but they may be much stiffer than other shoes you are used to. If you are worried about your boots fitting correctly, ask the salesperson if you can wear them around your house (not outside!) for a few hours and return them if there is a problem. **Never purchase boots online without first trying them on!**

### **BOOT BREAK-IN & CARE**

**Break in your boots well before the course begins!** Wear them around town, to school and at home, as much as possible. **You should start wearing your boots several weeks before your course.** This simple activity cannot be over-emphasized and will be one of the easiest ways to prevent blisters in the backcountry.

### **DO I NEED TO BUY GORE-TEX BOOTS?**

Most backpacking boots have a waterproof/breathable membrane like Gore-Tex in them. These fabrics are designed to keep the boot dry. Unfortunately waterproof boots take *much* longer to dry out than non-waterproof models and do not breathe nearly as well. Since it can be very difficult to find non-waterproof boots, **boots with a mesh panels built into the leather and treated with Gore-Tex can be a good compromise.**

**Since there is typically little precipitation in our California course areas, it is strongly recommended not to purchase boots with both a waterproof membrane and full grain leather, especially if you are prone to athlete's foot or our foot ailments.** The one exception is in cases of exceptionally high snow years since Gore-Tex coating with full grain leather will help keep your feet warmer in those environments. If you are attending a course in June or the late fall (October or November) in the High Sierra please consult your Student Services representative to ask about current snow levels.

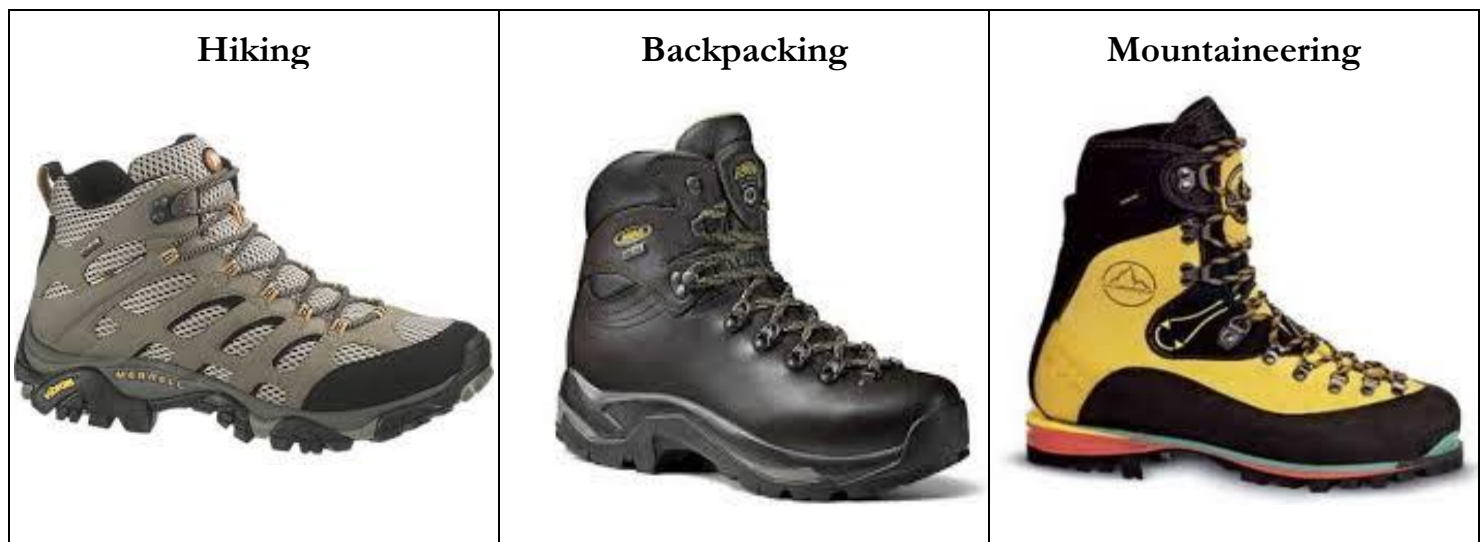


## Recommended Boots

The following list of boots are the recommended option for the majority of Outward Bound students. In general, **Hiking Boots** will offer the best balance of comfort, support and protection for your course. You may find a boot not listed that fulfills all requirements. Boot manufacturers change model names quite often so a model listed below may no longer be stocked. Make sure you take this list with you to show your salesperson what's required, and, if you have any questions, give us a call.

For students with past ankle injuries or those prone to twisting ankles, we recommend a more substantial **Backpacking Boots**. This style boot is also recommended during years of high snow conditions (*inquire with your Student Services representative for this information*).

We **DO NOT** recommend Mountaineering Boots for any courses.



Brand	Light Hiking/Hiking	Backpacking
Asolo	Piuma, Reston WP	Fugitive GTX
Oboz	Sawtooth Mid, Traverse Mid	Bridger BDry
La Sportiva	Core High GTX, Hyper Mid GTX	Thunder II GTX
Lowa	Zephyr Mid	Renegade
Scarpa	Moraine Mid, Mistral GTX	Kailash GTX
Vasque	Inhaler GTX, Breeze 2.0 Mid	Summit GTX, St Elias GTX
Merrell	Moab Ventilator, All Out Blaze Mid	Capra Sport Mid, Phaser Peak
Keen	Voyager Mid, Targhee II	Durand Mid
Salomon	X Ultra Mid II	Comet 3D